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Art Star Opens Curated Handmade Goods and Gifts Shop at Independence Visitor Center, Exposing Visitors to Local Artists and Artisans

New shop location provides unique retail options for visitors, complementing existing souvenir retail

January 25, 2024 (PHILADELPHIA)—The [Philadelphia Visitor Center Corporation](#) (“the Visitor Center”) and [Art Star](#) today announced a new retail partnership, opening the Art Star retail shop inside Independence Visitor Center at 599 Market Street, Philadelphia. The collaboration will bring a wide range of affordable and quality handmade goods to the Visitor Center, complementing existing souvenir retail and exposing visitors to the exceptional work of Philadelphia’s local artists and makers.

“We’re excited to work with Art Star to provide a different experience for visitors who want to bring a real, authentic piece of contemporary Philadelphia home with them. Our goal is to enhance our wildly popular gift store with contemporary, locally sourced crafts and mementos that offer the perfect souvenir for every kind of visitor who walks through our doors,” said **Kathryn Ott Lovell**, president & CEO, Philadelphia Visitor Center Corporation. “It’s neat for us and for visitors to say, ‘I knew about this up-and-coming Philadelphia artist before they hit it big.’ And it’s a great opportunity for these artists to get national and international exposure among our visitors.”

Art Star is a local women-owned business that represents working studio artists and crafters from the Philadelphia area and beyond with the goal of supporting and maintaining a thriving handmade community. They will curate a selection of handmade goods and gifts for the retail shop, including items like cards, baby goods, jewelry, art prints, pottery, candles, accessories, clothing, and more.

“We’re incredibly proud of the community of artists we have cultivated through Art Star and the exceptional work they create each and every day,” said **Megan Brewster**, co-owner, Art Star. “We see ourselves as conveners and cheerleaders of the local arts community, so we are thrilled to continue this important work on a wider scale now at Independence Visitor Center.”

Since its founding in 2004, Art Star has supported the careers of hundreds of artists, including Casey Lynch of Squirrel Tacos, Bethany Rusen of Stanley Chester & Albert Ceramics, Sarah Ryan of Sarah Draws Things, Hui-yi Kuo, and more.

“As a third-generation Philadelphian, I can’t think of a better souvenir to bring home than something handmade by a local artist or crafter,” said **Erin Waxman**, co-owner, Art Star. “Opening our shop inside Independence Visitor Center is a huge opportunity to expand Art Star’s reach and our artists’ reach and we are ready to make the most of this exciting new chapter.”

The Visitor Center's partnership with Art Star follows on the heels of its 2023 opening of The Rocky Shop at the Parkway Visitor Center, the only physical retail location of exclusively licensed apparel and souvenirs of the [Sly Stallone Shop](#) (the official brand of Sylvester Stallone) and the Rocky franchise.

The Art Star shop will be open daily from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Independence Visitor Center beginning Monday, January 30, with a ribbon cutting set for 10 a.m. Friday, January 26. A limited selection of Art Star's curated handmade goods is also available for purchase in the gift shops at LOVE Park Visitor Center and City Hall Visitor Center.

Grand Opening Events

Art Star Ribbon Cutting & Grand Opening | January 26 @ Independence Visitor Center

The Visitor Center and Art Star will host a ribbon cutting and grand opening ceremony for the new shop on Friday, January 26 at 10 a.m. at Independence Visitor Center.

Art Star CRAP Bazaar | January 27-28 @ Independence Visitor Center

Art Star will also continue to run its special events across Philadelphia and at Independence Visitor Center, beginning with [The Art Star CRAP Bazaar](#) on Saturday, January 27 and Sunday, January 28. This annual rummage sale and fundraiser will feature more than 20 of Art Star's annual crafters selling their "seconds" at huge discounts. The event will support not only the Art Star artist community, but also donate 25% of total sales to [Doctors Without Borders](#) and [The Young Artist Program](#).

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About the Philadelphia Visitor Center Corporation:

The Philadelphia Visitor Center Corporation is a Pennsylvania nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization, that works in cooperation with Visit Philadelphia®, the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, the City of Philadelphia, National Park Service, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Philadelphia Visitor Center Corporation operates the Independence Visitor Center in cooperation with the National Park Service. The Independence Visitor Center is the primary point of orientation for Independence National Historical Park and the official visitor center of the Philadelphia region, including Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties. In addition, the Corporation operates three outpost locations including the LOVE Park Visitor Center, City Hall Visitor Center, and the Parkway Outpost Visitor Center, the Philly PHLASH® Downtown Loop transit service, and the private event space, The Liberty View at Independence Visitor Center.

About Art Star:

Art Star, founded in 2004 by Megan Brewster and Erin Waxman, represents working studio artists and crafters from the Philadelphia area and beyond. All items are handcrafted within the US by individual artists or small production studios. Our goal is to support and maintain a thriving arts community by connecting our customers with goods made by local, independent artists & crafters. Learn more at artstarphilly.com or follow us on Instagram @artstarphilly.